

# Marriage in Islām

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# Is Rasam (Engagement) correct according to Shariah?

One of my friend's marriage talk happened two weeks ago. The family-members from the boy's side as well as those from the girl's side sat together and had a formal talk and agreed for the same. Now they want to do Rasam. Is it permissible?

When they had agreed and had a formal talk, why didn't they carry out the marriage itself? What else is marriage other than mutual agreement and formal talk. The wedding-sermon is desirable, but it wouldn't have been too difficult to arrange for.

After marriage, if there is some necessity, they have the option to postpone – by mutual agreement – sending the bride to the bridegroom.

However, if someone does do rasam/engagement, it constitutes a promise to marry. Talking to and seeing the bride shall remain prohibited for the boy. If either of the party so wills, they may go for another wedding alliance discarding the present one, even without informing the other party. They will earn sin for breaking the promise, however this other marriage will be valid.

As far as I know, rasam/mangni/betrothal involves some meaningless rituals like ring-presentation, etc. Un-Islamic traditions must be avoided at all costs. Usually, this happens only after both parties are in agreement regarding the alliance. At such a stage, nikāh (proposal and acceptance in front of two witnesses) should be the logical step, not un-Islamic rituals which needlessly delay the Sunnah of marriage.

Let us take our worthy predecessors as our role models, not the society. Let us not be of those who say, "We are bound by customs."

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ (المائدة: 104)

When it is said to them, “**Come to what Allah has sent down, and to the Messenger;**” they say, “**Sufficient for us is the path on which we have found our forefathers.**” Is it so, even though their forefathers knew nothing, and had no guidance either? (Qurān 5:104)

There was a time when Macaulay's sons (the school-educated youngsters) rebelled against their Salāh-observing and beard-honoring fathers. There was a time when Macaulay's daughters revolted against their purdah-observing moms. They were stupid. They purchased everlasting suffering in return for stupid look-alikeness of their mercenary role models, the Satans of Bollywood and Hollywood. They were ignorant and were duped by the glittering hollow slogans of Satans from the west. The result: In a few decades, mosques went vacant, cinema-halls

houseful; Allāh's Prophet's Sunnah of beard became a funny costume or sign of an uncouthed barbarian, burqah a sign of repression.

BUT one thing is for sure. Macaulay's children were not cowards.

Then, why are we, believers in Almighty Allāh, His valiant Prophet, and the Last Day of reckoning, such cowards?

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I am including a few articles below which I think is relevant to the question and useful for many of us:

1. [Hazrat Fātimah's marriage](#): an ideal marriage procedure which all of us should try to replicate.
2. Poignant story of one of the less-known lions of Islām [Hazrat Julaiḃib](#), and of his wife who rejected her parent's decision regarding her marriage and bowed to Allāh's Prophet's decision.
3. [Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān ibn 'Auf's simple marriage](#)

## Hazrat Fātimah's رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا marriage

(Sources: Sīratul Mustafā by Maulānā Idrīs Kandhlawī 2/166, Sīratun Nabī by Shiblī Nu'mānī 1/231, Islāhur Rustūm by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī 90-92, Halāl o Harām by Maulānā Khālid Saifullāh Rahmānī 276)

It was 2 AH, when first Hazrat Abū Bakr, and then Hazrat 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا requested the holy Prophet ﷺ for the blessing of marriage with Hazrat Fātimah, 15 ½ years old at the time. The Prophet said: "I am waiting for direction from Allāh." The two elder companions then advised Hazrat 'Alī to give it a try.

At first, Hazrat 'Alī was hesitant and unsure. How could he send marriage-proposal, when he had no money at all? The only thing that he owned at that time was a sheep-skin, a frayed Yemeni sheet, and an armour. For marriage, one must have some money at least, to pay the dower and bear the domestic expenses. But then the Prophet ﷺ had always been generous towards him, granting him all his requests. Will he oblige this time too?

He somehow went to the Prophet ﷺ and made the request. By this time, Allāh's Prophet ﷺ had received divine guidance on this matter which was in this young proposer's favor, so he accepted the proposal. Hazrat 'Alī was delighted beyond bounds, but then ...

"Do you have anything to pay the Mahr?" asked the Prophet ﷺ.

"No," replied Hazrat 'Alī as he felt his heart sink.

"Where is the armour that you received as battle-award after Badr?"

"Oh ..., yes, I have it."

"Well, then. Give the same to Fätimah as Mahr."

Obviously, the armour meant for men wouldn't be of much use to Fätimah. So, Hazrat 'Ali sold it to Hazrat Usmän رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا for 480 dirhams (~ ₹65,000) and presented the dirham coins to the holy Prophet ﷺ. Allāh's Prophet ﷺ asked him to arrange for perfumes and garments with this money.

When the time for marriage came, the Prophet ﷺ asked Hazrat 'Ali – who had till then been staying with the Prophet himself – to arrange for a home. So, 'Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ got a house on rent to spend his first post-wedding night with Hazrat Fätimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا.

Hazrat Anas, the blessed child attendant of the Prophet ﷺ, was asked to call Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Usmän, Talhah, Zubair, and some Ansäri companions رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. When they gathered, the Prophet ﷺ recited an eloquent wedding-sermon and conducted the formal proposal and acceptance.

The Prophet then asked his freed slave and foster-mother Hazrat Umme Aiman to accompany Fätimah to Hazrat 'Ali's house.

To equip their new home with household necessities, Allāh's Prophet ﷺ gifted a quilt, a leather cushion stuffed with some tree-bark, two hand-mills, a water-skin, and two earthen pitchers.

Hazrat Härithah bin Nu'män Al Ansäri owned several homes of which he had already gifted a few to the Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat Fätimah requested the Prophet to get a home from Hazrat Härithah once again, but the Prophet declined saying, "It feels embarrassing to ask him once again."

Somehow, Hazrat Härithah got wind of this conversation. Rushing to the Prophet ﷺ at once, he said, "O Prophet! Myself and whatever I have, belong to you, fully and completely. By Allāh! I would be more pleased if you took my house than if you left it with me." Hazrat Härithah then vacated one of his houses.

Once Hazrat Fätimah had shifted to the new house, the Prophet ﷺ made a visit. Standing on the door, he asked for permission to enter. Getting inside, he asked for a utensil full of water. He placed both his palms inside, and sprinkled some of the water on Hazrat 'Ali's chest and arms. He then called for Hazrat Fätimah who came staggering demurely. He sprinkled water on her too saying, "I have married you to the best man in my family."

Later on, Hazrat 'Ali arranged for Walimah-feast. The menu was: barley, dates, and mashed bread.

## Lessons in Hazrat Fätimah's marriage

1. Hazrat 'Ali himself went to the Prophet and made his proposal, alone and unaccompanied. Hazrat Thänawī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ writes: This shows that all the cumbersome formalities prevalent nowadays regarding engagement and betrothal are meaningless and against the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Verbal message and reply are sufficient.

2. Hazrat Thānawī further writes that Hazrat Fātimah was 15 ½ and 'Alī 21 at the time. This indicates that there should not be much delay in marriage after the child has reached puberty. Also, the boy and girl should be of somewhat comparable age. Preferably, the boy should be a little older than the girl.

3. The Prophet ﷺ invited some noble companions to the wedding. From this we learn that it is ok if we invite neighbors and close relations for the ceremony. This will ensure that relevant people are well-aware of the marriage. But there is no need to make complicated planning and extravagant arrangements for the purpose.

4. Can the Prophet's gifts to Hazrat Fatima رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا qualify as the dowry prevalent in our times?

Maulānā Khālid Saifullāh Rahmānī writes that the Prophet ﷺ was not only Hazrat Fātimah's father but also Hazrat 'Alī's guardian and supervisor. The Prophet himself had looked after Hazrat 'Alī all these years. Now, Hazrat 'Alī neither owned a house nor the necessary household commodities. Therefore, as the guardian of both the spouses, the Prophet ﷺ made arrangement for commodities necessary to make their new house livable.

That the gifts were not our prevalent dowry is also supported by the fact that the Prophet had three other daughters too, but there is no evidence that the Prophet gifted anything to any of them on the occasion of wedding. If the Prophet gave dowry only to Hazrat Fātimah, it would be injustice to other daughters which is just unimaginable for the high rank of the noble Prophet who made the exhortation, "**Be just to your children.**" (Bukhārī 2587)

## Obedience to Allāh and His Prophet has higher priority than obedience to parents

Parents' obedience is limited only to serving them, comforting them, talking politely to them, gifting to them, etc. When parents command to oppose the Islāmic Sharī'ah, the laws of Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ, the Sharī'ah rulings take precedence. We find an example in Hazrat Julaibīb's story below.

### Julaibīb and the wise girl

(Sources: Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr 6/422, Al Isti'āb fī Ma'rifatil As-hāb by Abū 'Umar An Namirī Al Qurtubī 1/272, Ma'āriful Qurān English by Muftī Muhammad Shafī' Uthmani 7/158-159)

A short young man with misshapen face, Julaibīb was not someone people would enjoy looking at. He well-remembered how he had been hated and disliked in the days of Ignorance. His presence itself meant offence to many.

Then, Islām came. There was a remarkable change in attitude. People now valued him for his faith, for loyalty to Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ that he professed. United by belief in Allāh and the

Hereafter, the Muslims treated him like brother, ate with him and talked to him. It felt so refreshing.

"Why don't you marry, Julaibib?" the noble Prophet ﷺ asked him one day.

"What ... marry ... did you say to *me*?" Julaibib was taken aback at this suggestion. He knew people had changed for the good. But marriage, come on .... Which girl in her right mind would like to spend her life with me, pass her days looking at my — as they used to say — hideous and ugly face. The very memory of those dark days of Kufr was painful. "I don't think so, Allāh's Prophet. I mean, who will go for someone like ... me. If there were one man unsalable in the marriage market, it would be me."

"But in Allāh's court, you are not unsalable. You are not worthless. In fact, invaluable are you, Julaibib," said the Prophet ﷺ.

To an Ansāri girl's father, Allāh's Prophet ﷺ made the proposal for Julaibib. The father stood expressionless for a while, then said, "Let me talk to her mother, my wife."

"No, never. How come?" the girl's mother was livid. "We have rejected proposals from so many fair and rich people. And Allāh's prophet ﷺ could not find anybody except Julaibib for our daughter. Is he his son?" And in a tone of finality, she declared, "We will never let Julaibib marry our daughter."

Behind the curtains, the girl was listening. She knew Julaibib, and that he was not the most pleasing to look at. She knew Allāh's Prophet ﷺ too, in whose obedience lay the success in this world and the Hereafter. She also knew that Allāh's Prophet ﷺ cared more for every Believer, than any person could care for his own self. The wishes of her parents, or mother at least, and that of the noble Prophet, the mercy to the entire Mankind, were at odds. It was not easy to decide.

"Hey, ... you are going to turn down Allāh's Prophet's proposal, are you?"

She didn't know, but somehow she had found the courage to speak just as her father had gone out of the door. Father was going to inform the holy Prophet ﷺ of unacceptability of the proposal.

"Have you forgotten what Allāh has said," she continued,

"وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ. (الأحزاب: ٣٦)"

"Once Allāh and His Prophet have settled a matter, there is no choice left for a believing man or woman in that matter. (Qurān 33:36)"

"If Allāh's Prophet ﷺ has chosen him for us, I have no objection. I am willing. I submit myself to his decision. Let the marriage take place."

For once, the mother looked shocked, so did the father who had just returned inside hearing the voices. Perhaps, the sudden, unexpected boldness of the modest and bashful girl had awakened them too to their senses. They too had realized the Prophet's bounties in holding them off the Hell-fire when they had been speeding towards it with their Kufr, and the sacrifices he had to make in the process. How could he be an ill-wisher for anyone? It looked like a long time had passed, for when mother spoke, there was no trace of anger in her voice. Father too seemed to have realized the error.

"Oh, yes, you are right, my daughter." Mother looked solemn. Father nodded, and then left again, but this time to inform the Prophet ﷺ of acceptance of his proposal.

"Allāh's Prophet, if you so wish, we agree to the proposal," the girl's father was saying.

"Yes, I do." When Allāh's Prophet ﷺ was informed of the girl's reaction, he was impressed by her wisdom, at her love and respect for Allāh and His Prophet. "Allāh! Shower her with all the good things in this life and the Hereafter! Allāh! Never let her live a life of misery!"

The Prophet then carried out the marriage.

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Julaibīb was a part of this military expedition led by the holy Prophet ﷺ. With Allāh's help, the Muslims were victorious against the evil Kāfirs. But not without the cost of precious lives of some mujāhids.

"Who all are missing?" After the battle was over, Allāh's Prophet ﷺ asked the Sahābah around him. Many of them were injured, all were exhausted, but none among them was dead, at least.

So and so, A and B, X and Y, ... The noble companions named some people who had come with them, but had left them now to enjoy the bliss and bounties Allāh had in store for them.

"Anyone else? Think, think. Who else is not here?" the Prophet ﷺ repeated looking all around him.

Some more names came up.

"What about Julaibīb? I can't see him. Where is he? Go and search for him."

Easy to be forgotten, Julaibīb had lived a life lonelier than others. He had no parents in Madīnah, no brothers, no sisters. But here he was on the ground, not alone though, this time at least. Julaibīb was in a fairly large company of *seven*, all of them strangers however.

Many of the searchers wondered at this lion of Islām who had killed these many before drinking the glass of martyrdom at the hands of the enemy, these fallen seven's co-fighters.

The Prophet ﷺ now stood at the place, looking at the valiant face of Julaibīb. Companions could see the Prophet struggling to hold his tears. "He killed seven before they killed him, did he? He is mine, I am his. He killed seven. He is my family, I am his family. ..."

As they dug his grave, Allāh's Prophet held him supporting his body with his hands. As his soul flew carefree, enjoying the delights of the lovely lush gardens of Paradise, his body back in this world had the honor of Allāh's last Prophet's touch and support; the same prophet, to have a glance at whom, all the prophets had come out from their graves on Mi'rāj night; the very Prophet, to get the honor of following whom, Allāh's word and miracle, Hazrat 'Isā will return from atop the skies.

Carried in the most sacred of all biers and cots, Allāh's Prophet's blessed arms, he had now been placed inside his grave.

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Back at Madinah, the wise girl lived a highly prosperous life. No husband-less woman among the Ansārs of Madinah had a higher monthly budget. Allāh's Prophet's ﷺ supplication was bearing fruits.

## Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān ibn 'Auf's marriage

(Sources: Al Bukhārī: 2048, Fathul Bārī 9/232, Suwarum min Hayātis Sahābah: 254)

It was long before the ruling for veil had been revealed. The holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his noble companions had migrated to Madīnah, sacrificing all their wealth and property, houses and belongings. To ensure mutual cooperation and temporary bearing of day-to-day expenses of the migrants, the holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had established a brotherhood relationship between the migrant companions and the local Ansār companions. Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān ibn 'Auf had been made Sa'd ibn Rabī' Ansārī's brother.

Hazrat Sa'd Ansārī returned to his home in 'Abdur Rahmān's company. After dinner at night, he said,

"See, 'Abdur Rahmān! None among the local Ansār is richer than me. So, I would like to divide my property with you into half. Then, I have two wives too. Whichever of the two you like I would willingly separate from her, and after she completes her waiting period, you may marry her."

Hazrat Sa'd was well-aware of the spirit of sacrifice that each of his two wives was blessed with. He was confident that each of the two would gladly agree to this deal for the sake of this young brother-in-Īmān who had become homeless for the love of his Dīn. However, Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān ibn 'Auf, the embodiment of self-respect and self-reliance, had other things on his mind. "I do not need these things. Just tell me the way to market so that I may engage in trade."



Hazrat Sa'd Ansäri informed him of the way to Banü Qainuqä' market. 'Abdur Rahmān started his trade the next morning. Out of the profit he earned, he brought home some cheese and ghee. The blessed business continued and in a short time, Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān was rich enough to afford Mahr amount and Walimah party for marriage.

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In a side-lane, the Mercy to the Worlds صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ meets Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān ibn 'Auf رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān's cheerful demeanor and difficult-to-hide smile on the lips could not evade notice from the eyes of the Prophet, exceptional as they were in inferring the facts from symptoms. On 'Abdur Rahmān's garment, patches of saffron-perfume were visible too. Such perfumes were used by women. Perhaps, the effects of the perfume had transmitted to his garment from his bride's.

“Have you married, 'Abdur Rahmān?”

“Yes, Allāh's Prophet!”

“Whom?”

“An Ansäri woman Umme Iyäs, bint Abul Haisar Ausiyyah.”

“How much Mahr did you pay her?” enquired the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

“A date-stone's weight of gold.”

“Well done! Now proceed for the Walimah party. No need for any elaborate arrangement. Just a goat, if you can afford, will do. May Allāh bless your earnings!”

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The prayer of Allāh's Prophet showed its effect and wealth started rushing towards Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān like flood-water. He used to say that even if I picked up a stone or gravel from the earth, there was a probability that I would discover some gold or silver beneath.

The last battle in the holy Prophet's life was the Tabük expedition. Till now, the Muslims had confronted 'Arab tribes only. But now, they were to face the super-power of the day, the Roman Empire whose army possessed far more men and equipment than any other army in the world with the possible exception of the other super-power, Irän. That year sadly had been the year of drought too. Several poor Mujähids visited the Prophet in the hope of participating in the Jihäd but the Prophet could not provide the necessary weapons and equipment for them to participate. The sincere Sahäbah returned from the Prophet's presence shedding tears at their inability to participate in this testing Jihäd against the super-power.

The holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then called upon the Sahäbah to present their wealth too for this Jihäd, as much as they could. At this appeal, Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān ibn 'Auf رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ came from his home with 24 kg of gold and presented it for the Jihäd fund. Feeling that he was over-exerting himself, Hazrat 'Umar said, “'Abdur Rahmān has surely deprived his family-memebers of their rightful due. I don't think anything would still be left at his home after this gift worth nearly 650 million rupees!”

“Abdur Rahmān! Have you left anything for your family-members?” asked the Prophet in his caring, benevolent voice.

“Of course, Allāh’s Prophet! What I have left for my family-members is far more and far better than this.”

“How much exactly?”

“All the wealth and valuables, and all the provisions and rewards that Allāh and His Prophet have promised.”

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After arriving in Madinah empty-handed at the time of Hijrah, when Hazrat 'Abdur Rahmān ibn 'Auf died in 32 AH, he left behind four wives. Each of them received a hundred thousand dinārs from the inheritance he left behind, making his total inheritance equal to 32 lakh dinār or nearly 37 billion rupees. One thousand camels, one hundred horses, and three thousand goats of his inheritance were in addition.